

Cross-Linguistic Comparison of Phraseological Units (on the Example of Tajik and Russian Languages)

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Abstract. *Phraseology represents an essential component of linguistic competence, reflecting not only structural properties of language but also culturally embedded patterns of meaning. This article presents a cross-linguistic comparison of phraseological units in Tajik and Russian to identify their structural, semantic, and cultural similarities and differences. The study is based on a comparative analysis of selected phraseological units extracted from authoritative phraseological dictionaries and linguistic sources in both languages. The analysis focuses on the degree of semantic equivalence, metaphorical motivation, and cultural specificity of phraseological expressions. The findings reveal that while several phraseological units in Tajik and Russian demonstrate partial or full semantic correspondence, many units are culture-specific and rely on distinct imagery and conceptual frameworks. The study highlights the role of national and cultural factors in the formation of phraseology. It underscores the importance of contrastive phraseological analysis for translation studies, lexicography, and foreign language teaching.*

Keywords: *Phraseology, Cross-Linguistic Comparison, Language, Idioms, Phraseological Units, Culture, Traditions*

Introduction

Phraseology has long been recognized as a significant area of linguistic research due to its ability to reflect the interaction between language, culture, and cognition. Phraseological units, including idioms, fixed expressions, and collocations, represent stable combinations of words whose meaning is often not fully understood from their individual components. As such, they play a crucial role in natural language use and pose considerable challenges for language learners, translators, and lexicographers.

In recent decades, cross-linguistic studies of phraseology have gained increasing attention, as they allow researchers to identify both universal and language-specific features of phraseological systems. Comparative analysis of phraseological units across languages contributes to a deeper understanding of how different linguistic communities conceptualize reality and encode cultural experience through fixed expressions.

Tajik and Russian languages provide a particularly interesting basis for cross-linguistic phraseological comparison. Despite long-standing historical, cultural, and social contact between the two linguistic communities, Tajik and Russian belong to different language families and exhibit distinct grammatical structures and cultural traditions. These factors have influenced the development of their respective phraseological systems, making them suitable for contrastive analysis.

Methodology

The present study aims to conduct a cross-linguistic comparison of phraseological units in Tajik and Russian in order to identify their structural and semantic characteristics, determine types of equivalence between phraseological expressions, and reveal the role of cultural specificity in their formation. The study contributes to the field of contrastive phraseology and offers insights relevant to translation studies, bilingual lexicography, and foreign language teaching.

This article provides a comparative analysis of phraseological units drawn from Sadriiddin Ayni's novel "Марги судхӯр" (*The Death of the Usurer*) and their Russian equivalents, examining the degree of semantic equivalence, the metaphoric basis of each expression, and the influence of cultural context. For example:

1. *-Ханӯз аз даҳонат бӯи шиш меояд, аммо ту худро сисола мегӯи? – гуфт Қори Ишкамба. (Марги судхӯр, с.110). (milk still smells from your mouth).*

*– У тебя **изо рта еще материнским молоком пахнет**, а ты говоришь, что тебе тридцать лет! – возмутился тут Кори Ишкамба. (Смерть ростовщика, с.74).*

This phraseological unit is used to denote youth, immaturity, and lack of life experience. In both Tajik and Russian, the expression is based on the same metaphorical image, referring to a person who has recently been nourished by milk and is therefore still young and inexperienced.

From a contrastive perspective, this example demonstrates full phraseological equivalence. The semantic meaning, expressive function, and metaphorical motivation coincide almost completely in both languages. The Russian translation preserves not only the meaning but also the figurative imagery of the Tajik original, which suggests the presence of shared or universal metaphorical concepts related to age and experience.

2. *... аз фоидаи он маблаг ҳар сол садҳо сӯм даромад карда **шикамашонро хорида нишинанду** оммаи мардум аз гуруснагӣ бимиранд. (Марги судхӯр, с. 167). (to sit scratching one's belly)*

*... не позволять спокойно сидеть, **почесывая живот**, получать стотысячные доходы, когда труженик умирает голодной смертью. (Смерть ростовщика, с.104).*

In this example, the phraseological unit describes a state of idleness and passive enjoyment of wealth, often with a negative evaluative connotation. Both expressions rely on a bodily image to convey social criticism, emphasizing laziness and unjustified comfort.

The Tajik and Russian units display a high degree of semantic and structural similarity, though the Russian version is slightly expanded syntactically. The metaphorical image remains identical, which allows us to classify this case as near-complete equivalence. The translation successfully retains the expressive and evaluative force of the original phraseological unit.

3. *Қоришшамба бо шунидани ин пешниҳод чунон шодӣ кард, ки аз хурсандӣ **дар нӯстаи намеғунҷид**,... (Марги судхӯр, с.152). (he could not fit into his skin from joy)*

*Услыхав это, Кори Ишкамба был так восхищен, что от радости **сердце ростовщика было готово выпрыгнуть из груди** (Смерть ростовщика, с.75). (the heart was ready to jump out of the chest)*

Both phraseological units convey an extreme degree of joy and emotional excitement. However, unlike the previous examples, the Tajik and Russian expressions are based on different metaphorical images. The Tajik unit uses the image of a person metaphorically "outgrowing" their own body due to emotion, while the Russian unit focuses on the heart as the central organ of emotional experience.

Despite these metaphorical differences, the communicative function and emotional intensity are equivalent. This case represents partial phraseological equivalence, where semantic correspondence is achieved through different figurative means. Such examples highlight the role of cultural and cognitive factors in shaping phraseological imagery.

The present research adopts a qualitative contrastive approach to the analysis of phraseological units in Tajik and Russian. The empirical material is drawn from the literary works of the prominent Tajik writer Sadriiddin Ayni, specifically the novel *Mapzu cyðx̄p* (*The Death of the Usurer*), and its authoritative Russian translation.

The choice of literary texts as the primary data source is motivated by the fact that literary language reflects authentic, culturally marked phraseology and allows for the observation of phraseological units in a natural contextual environment. Phraseological units were identified based on their semantic integrity, stability, and figurative meaning, following traditional criteria established in phraseological studies.

For the purposes of comparison, Tajik phraseological units were analyzed alongside their Russian equivalents as presented in the translated text. The analysis was conducted according to the following parameters:

1. semantic equivalence,
2. structural correspondence,
3. metaphorical motivation,
4. cultural specificity.

Based on these criteria, the selected phraseological units were classified according to the degree of equivalence between the Tajik original and the Russian translation, including full, near-complete, and partial equivalence. This methodological framework enables a systematic comparison of phraseological imagery and meaning across two languages.

The comparative analysis of phraseological units from Tajik and Russian reveals both shared and language-specific features in their phraseological systems. The presence of fully equivalent units based on identical metaphorical images suggests that certain conceptualizations, such as associations between youth and milk or idleness and bodily imagery, may be grounded in universal human experience.

At the same time, cases of partial equivalence demonstrate that emotional and evaluative meanings can be expressed through different metaphorical frameworks. For instance, while Tajik phraseology may employ imagery related to the body as a whole, Russian often localizes emotional intensity in specific organs such as the heart. These differences reflect distinct cultural and cognitive traditions that shape figurative language.

The findings also underscore the importance of translator choices in preserving not only the semantic content but also the expressive and stylistic value of phraseological units. Successful translation of phraseology requires sensitivity to cultural imagery and an understanding of functional equivalence rather than mere literal correspondence.

From a broader perspective, the results confirm that cross-linguistic phraseological comparison contributes to a deeper understanding of national linguistic worldviews and highlights the role of phraseology as a carrier of cultural meaning.

Conclusion

This article has presented a cross-linguistic comparison of phraseological units in Tajik and Russian based on selected examples from the works of Sadriiddin Ayni. The analysis has shown that phraseological units in the two languages demonstrate varying degrees of equivalence, ranging from full semantic and metaphorical correspondence to partial equivalence achieved through different figurative means. The study confirms that while some phraseological concepts are shared across languages, others are shaped by culturally specific imagery and cognitive patterns. These findings emphasize the significance of phraseological analysis for contrastive linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication. Despite the limited number of examples analyzed, the qualitative approach adopted in this study allows for an in-depth examination of phraseological meaning and

imagery. Future research may expand the corpus to include additional literary works or explore phraseological variation across different genres and historical periods.

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